

Application No. 08/938,468
Amendment "II" dated June 30, 2005
Reply to Office Action mailed April 13, 2005

REMARKS

The Office Action, mailed April 13, 2005, considered claims 47-64. Claims 47-57 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,119,476 (Texier), in view of Goodman, Danny, *The Complete HyperCard Handbook*, September 1987, Bantom Books, Inc. pp. 56-63, 85-183, and in further view of Dayton, Doug, *PerForm Pro Expands Simple WYSIWYG Form Design, Filling, PC Week*, Volume 7, Number 39, October 1, 1990, pp. 33-35. Claims 58-60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Texier, Goodman, and Dayton and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,404,294 (Karnik). Claims 61-64 are rejected under 34 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Texier, in view of Goodman, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,121,499 (McCaskill).¹

Some of the claims 54-55 and 61-64 were also rejected as being directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicants respectfully disagree. For example, as recited in claim 54, the recited method is directed to presenting data in a data processing system, which is a computing system. In other words, the acts of the recited method or process are performed by a computing system, namely, the data processing system, and are not, therefore just a series of mental steps. The same logic also applies to claim 61, which is also directed to a method in a data processing system for inputting user input into a custom form. Methods and processes performed by a computing system are and have been found to be directed to statutory subject matter for quite some time, as long as it is found to produce a "useful, concrete and tangible". *State Street Bank & Trust Co. v. Signature Financial Group Inc.*, 149 F. 3d 1368, 1374, 47 USPQ2d 1596, 1601-02 (Fed. Cir. 1998).

¹ Although the prior art status of the cited art is not being challenged at this time, Applicants reserve the right to challenge the prior art status of the cited art at any appropriate time, should it arise. Accordingly, any arguments and amendments made herein should not be construed as acquiescing to any prior art status of the cited art.

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In fact, "[a]s cast, 35 U.S.C. 101 defines four categories of inventions that Congress deemed to be the appropriate subject matter of a patent; namely, processes, machines, manufactures and compositions of matter. The latter three categories define "things" while the first category defines "actions" (i.e., inventions that consist of a series of steps or acts to be performed). See 35 U.S.C. 100(b) ("The term 'process' means process, art, or method, and includes a new use of a known process, machine, manufacture, composition of matter, or material."). See MPEP 2106.

By this paper, claims 47, 54, 56, 57, 61 and 64 have been amended and new claims 65-66 have been added. Following this paper, claims 47-66 remain pending, of which claims 47, 54, 56, 57 and 61 are the independent claims at issue.

Applicants' invention, as claimed for example in independent method claim 54, relates to presenting data collected from custom forms in a data processing system. The method retrieves a form data structure for a form that has a field object with one or more attributes for each field of the form. The one or more attributes comprise at least one of (i) a group attribute to indicate that the field is in a particular attribute group for enabling or disabling the field based on any other fields within the particular attribute group, or (ii) an idle attribute to indicate that a form control procedure for the form is called periodically. The method also retrieves a form control procedure for providing custom behavior indicating user-defined operations associated with the fields of the form. For each field of the form, the method invokes the form control procedure, specifies the field, and receives input data through an input device. For received input data, the method invokes the form control procedure, and specifies the input data and an indication of field to which the input data is directed, so that the form control procedure can override the standard behavior of the field. For each field of the form, the method further invokes the form control

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procedure and specifies the field to prepare data directed to the field for presentation. The method presents the prepared data according to the form control procedure. Independent claim 47 is a system claim, but recites similar limitations.

Applicants' invention, as claimed for example in independent method claim 56, is related to the foregoing method, but corresponds more particularly to collecting data and storing a custom form in a data processing system for displaying a plurality of forms developed by a user. For each of the forms, the method stores a form control procedure and a field object having a data description and attributes, as described above. As further recited, the method selects one of the plurality of forms, retrieves the form data structure for the selected form, and for each of the fields of the selected form, invokes the form control procedure of the retrieved form data structure to control the displaying of the field on the display device. For each of a plurality of fields of the selected form, the method receives user input from the input device, the user input being directed to the field, invokes the form control procedure of the retrieved form data structure and passes to the form control procedure the received user input and an indication of the field to which the user input is directed. The form control procedure determines whether to override the standard behavior of the field to which the user input is directed. If the form control procedure determines to override the standard behavior, the method performs a custom behavior for the field to which the user input is directed, the custom behavior indicating user-defined operations associated with the fields of the form, and returns an indication as to whether the standard behavior has been overridden. The method performs the standard behavior for the field only if the standard behavior has not been overridden.

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With respect to returning an indication as to whether the standard behavior has been overridden or should be performed, independent method claims 57 and 61 recite similar limitations.

Texier discloses the use of programming instructions to generate windows to be displayed on a computer screen. Col. 2, ll. 61-68. To fill information into a form field, *Texier* discloses a variety of editors. Col. 8, l. 23 -- col. 10, l. 17. The editors manage their output, including the validation of the filled information. Col. 8, ll. 10-12.

Goodman discloses instructions for using HyperCard, including authoring HyperCard stacks for managing information. See "Introduction to Authoring" beginning on p. 85. Chapter 9, beginning on page 129, and chapter 10, beginning on page 161 disclose adding fields and buttons to cards, respectively.

Perform Pro is a high-level product review for a form designer. *Perform Pro* discloses a toolbox and various menus for designing forms, but does not include any details regarding the technology used to describe the fields of a form.

McCaskill discloses a method for controlling the editing order of cells in a spreadsheet by evaluating a next cell attribute of a current cell. Figure 4. The next cell attribute of a cell simply indicates which cell should be edited next when a next cell key is pressed by the operator, in contrast to using a cursor motion key to indicate that the next cell to edit is in one or four directions relative to the current cell. Col. 3, l. 64 -- col. 4, l. 1.

With regard to claims 47 and 54, it is asserted in the Office Action asserts that *Texier's* validate option enables the system to be made aware of any data that has changed to become invalidated and asserts that this is analogous with the inform attribute that indicates a notification is sent whenever the field is affected by a user event. Although applicants do not necessarily

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agree with this assertion, the inform attribute has been removed from the recited list of alternative attributes. Accordingly, it is now required that the field object includes at least one of the group attribute, which indicates that the field is in a particular attribute group for enabling or disabling the field based on any other fields within the particular attribute group, or an idle attribute that indicates that a form control procedure for the form is called periodically.

As recited in the new claims, the scope of the invention also applies to embodiments in which the attribute necessarily includes the group attribute (claim 65) and the idle attribute (claim 66).

Inasmuch as none of these remaining alternative attributes in the list has been addressed by the examiner and do not appear to be taught or suggested by the cited disclosure in the art of record, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 47 and 54 are distinguished from the art of record for at least this reason, as are all of the corresponding dependent claims, including, but not limited to claims 65-66.

The foregoing clarification, regarding the group attribute and the idle attribute have also been added to each of the other independent claims, 56-57 and 61, such that these claims and all of the dependent claims should also now be found to be distinguished over the cited art of record.

In view of the foregoing, the other rejections and assertions of record with respect to the independent and dependent claims are now moot, and therefore need not be addressed individually. Nevertheless, it will be appreciated that Applicants do not necessarily acquiesce to any assertions in the Office Action that are not specifically addressed above, and hereby reserve the right to challenge those assertions at any appropriate time in the future, should it arise, including any official notice.

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Although it is not necessary to address any of the other rejections, as mentioned above, Applicants would like to address the examiner's response to arguments and assertions made with regard to having Texier perform validation checks on a blank field before performing user input on said field. With regard to this assertion, Applicants respectfully submit that it would not be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to do this, simply to provide "a highly adaptable database." In particular, this would not be an efficient use of resources to validate data fields that were blank and prior to being filled. Because of this, there also wouldn't be any motivation to do this.

If, however, the examiner wishes to continue his line of reasoning in this regard, Applicants respectfully request that the examiner find support in the cited art for any said motivation, inasmuch as the motivation must come from the art itself. Otherwise, such a rejection would be relying on impermissible hindsight.

Furthermore, Applicants also point out that it would not be possible for the received user input to be passed to the form control procedure prior to the standard behavior of receiving the user input, as claimed. This limitation, which was addressed in the last response, does not appear to have been specifically responded to. Instead, it was only stated that the validation (custom behavior) is performed prior to receiving user input (standard behavior) and that receiving user input (standard behavior) is performed only if it has not been overridden.

However in this regard, it was clearly questioned where Texier teaches returning an indication as to whether the standard behavior (receiving user input) has been overridden prior to performing the standard behavior (receiving user input)? In other words, if receiving user input is substituted for standard behavior and validation is substituted for custom behavior in each of independent claims 56, 57, and 61, it becomes clear that Texier contains no corresponding

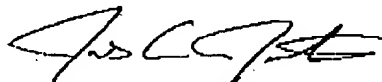
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teaching. Accordingly, even assuming for the sake of argument that Texier can be read as asserted in the Office Action, this reading of Texier does not satisfy the limitations recited in independent claims 56, 57, and 61.

Based on at least the foregoing reasons, therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that the cited art fails to anticipate or make obvious Applicants' invention, as claimed, for example, in independent claims 47, 54, 56, 57, 61, and the corresponding dependent claims. In the event that the Examiner finds any remaining impediment to a prompt allowance of this application that may be clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Dated this 30 day of June, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,



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